

# Sir William Worsley appointed as Forestry Commission Chair

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers has today (3 February) confirmed Sir William Worsley as the new Chair of the Forestry Commission.

The announcement comes as Sir Harry Studholme's time as Forestry Commission Chair ends after seven years in post.

Sir William will step down as the government's Tree Champion, a position he has held since June 2018, when he takes on his new role.

## **Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:**

With his great expertise in forestry and passion for nature and trees, Sir William will play a pivotal role in leading the Forestry Commission at a critical time as it moves into its second century.

Tree planting will play a crucial part in the government's bold action to combat climate change, and the Forestry Commission has a vital role in delivering our ambitious plans for England's forests and woodlands.

I also want to thank Sir Harry for his dedication in leading the organisation for the past seven years and wish him all the best in future endeavours.

Trees, woods and forests are so important to us – improving our landscapes, helping capture carbon, improving our general wellbeing and providing a renewable resource in the timber they produce.

It couldn't be a more exciting time to join the Forestry Commission. As Chair, my aim will be to celebrate, protect and deepen the impact of its excellent work, not only for the sake of our environment but also for the huge benefits that our success brings for society.

## **Ian Gambles, Chief Executive Officer of Forestry Commission, said:**

Sir William's appointment is great news for the Forestry Commission and the wider forestry sector. He is one of the UK's most engaged environmental champions for forestry.

I am confident that Sir William will bring the expertise and vision

required to set a bold direction for the country's forests and woodlands and I look forward to working closely with him.

Sir William will take up the role on 10 February and will be in post for three years.

He currently holds the posts of Chair of the National Forest Company as well as Chairman of the Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. He will be standing down from his role as National Forest Company Chair in May to allow for a new Chair to be reappointed.

Once Sir Harry's term ends, he will be working on a range of projects in alternative energy, carbon capture and climate change mitigation as well as managing his own forestry and farming interests in Devon.

### **Sir William biography:**

- Sir William will be standing down as government-appointed National Tree Champion with confirmation of his appointment. He has been the government's National Tree Champion since June 2018 and as part of this role, has worked on the developing English Tree Strategy, which will be consulted on in spring, by engaging stakeholders to understand how policy changes can support our trees, woodlands and forests.
- Sir William Worsley is currently the Chair of National Forest Company and will be standing down from this position in May so a new Chair can be recruited.
- He is current Chairman of the Howardian Hills Area of Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee and holds several other non-executive positions including previous appointee to the Independent Panel on Forestry.
- He began his career as a chartered surveyor and for several years worked with the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) as former President and Chairman of the board.

### **The Forestry Commission:**

- Established a century ago, the Forestry Commission (FC) is the non-ministerial government department responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands.
- The Forestry Commission works with two agencies: Forestry England, which manages the Public Forest Estate, and Forest Research, the principal organisation for forestry and tree related research.
- Forestry is a devolved matter, with a range of agencies leading the sector in the devolved administrations. The Forestry Commission leads the sector in England and looks after the English Public Forest Estate through Forestry England. Forestry Research continues to operate across the whole of Great Britain.
- Further details about the Forestry Commission structure can be seen at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/forestry-commission>

## Notes to editors:

- Please send any interview bids for Sir William to [newsdesk@defra.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@defra.gov.uk)
- All appointments to the Forestry Commission are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointment has been made in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments.
- There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. Sir William has declared that he has not taken part in any political activity in the past five years.